

In the Claims:

Cancel claims 1 through 13 and replace with the following claims 14 through 32.

--14. A depilatory composition in the form of an aqueous alkaline gel comprising:

(i) a first polymeric binder comprising a charged cross-linked, water-soluble polymer;

5 (ii) a second polymeric binder comprising a linear water-soluble polymer;

(iii) a depilatory agent; and

(iv) a buffer system which maintains the pH of the composition at a value of from 10.5 to 13.0.--

--15. A depilatory composition according to claim 14 in which the first polymeric binder is present in an amount of from 0.1 to 3.0% w/w.--

--16. A depilatory composition according to claim 15 in which the cross-linked polymer is a cross-linked acrylic polymer, a cross-linked polyacrylamide or a copolymer of methyl vinyl ether and maleic anhydride cross-linked with dodecadiene.--

--17. A depilatory composition according to claim 14 in which the second polymeric binder is present in an amount of from 0.2 to 3.0% w/w.--

--18. A depilatory composition according to claim 17 in which the second polymeric binder comprises a linear non-

ionic polymer and/or a positively charged polymer and/or a negatively charged polymer.--

--19. A depilatory composition according to claim 17 in which the second polymeric binder comprises one or more of polyethylenimine, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, polyethylene oxide, polyethylene glycol, cellulose, hydroxy propyl cellulose, cetyl
5 hydroxy ethyl cellulose, cetyl hydroxy propyl cellulose, starch, a polyglucoside, a polysaccharide, guar gum, carrageenan, a sclerotium gum, a polypeptide, and a copolymer of sodium acrylate or of hydroxy ethyl cellulose with dimethyl diallyl ammonium chloride.--

--20. A depilatory composition according to claim 14 in which the depilatory agent is potassium thioglycolate or thioglycerol.--

--21. A depilatory composition according to claim 20 which additionally comprises an accelerator for the degradation of keratin.--

--22. A depilatory composition according to claim 21 in which the accelerator is urea, thiourea, dithioerythritol, ethoxydiglycol or methylpropyldiol.--

--23. A depilatory composition according to claim 14 in which the buffer system comprises a silicate, arginine, a nicotinate, polyethylenimine or a phosphate.--

--24. A depilatory composition according to claim 14 which has a yield point not more than 200 Pa.--

--25. A depilatory composition according to claim 14 in which the shear rate needed to decrease the viscosity of the gel by half is in the range of from 10^{-2} s^{-1} to 200 s^{-1} .--

--26. A depilatory composition according to claim 25 which the shear rate is from 1 s^{-1} to 50 s^{-1} .--

--27. A depilatory composition in the form of an aqueous alkaline gel comprising:

- (i) from 0.1% to 3.0% w/w of a first polymeric binder comprising a copolymer of methyl vinyl ether and maleic anhydride cross-linked with dodecadiene,
- (ii) from 0.2% to 3.0% w/w of a second polymeric binder comprising polyethylenimine, polyvinyl pyrrolidone and mixtures thereof,
- (iii) from 0.1% to 6.0% w/w of a depilatory agent comprising potassium thioglycolate, dipotassium thioglycolate and mixtures thereof,
- (iv) from 2.0% to 6.0% w/w of a buffer system comprising L-arginine, polyethylenimine or mixtures thereof.--

--28. A depilatory composition according to claim 27 which additionally comprises:

(v) from 5.0% to 10.0% w/w of an accelerator for the degradation of keratin.--

--29. A depilatory composition according to claim 28 in which the accelerator is urea.--

--30. A depilatory composition according to claim 27 in the form of a sprayable gel.--

--31. A process for producing a depilatory composition according to claim 27, which process comprises the steps of:

- (i) forming a first premix by mixing water and the first polymeric binder,
- (ii) forming a second premix by mixing water, the buffer system and the second polymeric binder,
- (iii) adding the depilatory agent to the second premix with stirring to obtain a mixture,
- (iv) adding the first premix to the mixture with stirring, and
- (v) adjusting the pH to between 10.5 and 13.0.--

--32. A process for producing a depilatory composition according to claim 28, which process comprises:

- (i) forming a first premix by mixing water and the first polymeric binder,
- (ii) forming a second premix by mixing water, the buffer system and the second polymeric binder,